NEWSLETTER   APRIL 1987

SHOULD YOU TRASH YOUR OLD COMPUTER?

When do you trash your old computer? What do you do with the knowledge you have gained from it? This problem will bother you everytime you read a book or visit a friend. Should you dump the old Z-80 and "go for the gusto" with the new equipment on the shelves today? The answer isn't easy: for to dump the old machine means learning a whole new theory of thinking, buying different type of programs, and new accessories. There isn't much compatibility in the old and new equipments. Again what do you do with all that time and energy you devoted to your old machine? Poof!!! Forget all you ever knew?

The new and the old don't intermix. Your old programs, datafiles, etc. won't identify on the new machines. Start over again. Use what you have previously learned to learn the new areas of operations, instructions, functions, etc.

Now that you understand your goals in obtaining a new machine, what do you do with the old machine? Value? What value does it have? The price your old machines are worth won't buy you a new machine's programs. Yes. The value of the old machines have dropped drastically. In short, their value is just about all gone. So how do you sell an old machine? Well, a Club's B.B.S. System or the newspaper Miniwant ads, or a swap meet could help one solve the dilema. Those are about the only outlets. You could be kind enough to give it away to some kid in your neighborhood, or to a relative. Or you could just pack it away in the storage room. Whatever you do - remember - the biggest part of your computer knowledge will go with it. Those new machines require a whole new way of thinking, a completely new knowledge of computer hardware, and just as much time as your old machine did. So - think before you buy; do justify your reasoning before you part with the old computer.

WARNING!!!

A quote from Ft. Worth to a Tandy 1000 owner; "our computers have several expansion and upgrade options available. We do not state, nor is it reasonable to expect, that they will all be used in the computer at the same time." Be careful before you buy your next Tandy machine - make it work before you take it home with you.

WORDSTAR 4.0

Those of you that operate the CP/M or MS/DOS "WORDSTAR 4.0" word processor will be pleased to know that the "WORDSTAR 4.0" has everything you might want to convert to incorporate into your word processor - and for only $89.00. A special trade-in offer by "Micro Pro" will get you that price. The regular $495.00 price is also available. Read your magazines for details, or come to the Club Meeting, and we will tell you. Yes, the new "Wordstar 4.0" is great!

LOTTO.BAS

Now you can win everytime you play the Calif. LOTTO game. "CODE WORKS" has a very quick program you type into your machine, and, PRESTO!!! YOU WIN!!! A sure thing for those who tease lady luck. By the way, they offer their subscriptions in TRSDOS, CP/M, or MS-DOS - and only for $20.00 per year. A good price for programs you can type into your machine while you learn BASIC Language Programming.

APPLE DOS & MS-DOS:

Tandy must not have good horse sense in keeping its Apple Computer Board restricted from school systems. Now, you can buy a board that operates in the PC from the same company. The "TRACK STAR" board is sold by Diamond Computer Systems, Sunnyvale, CA.

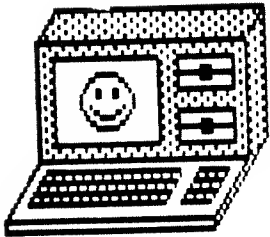"I bought some *hardware* for your computer, dear."

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>>> A COMPUTER GUIDE FOR BEGINNERS <<<

BIT: A word to describe computers, as in "Our son's computer cost quite a bit."

BOOT: What your friends give you because you spent too much time bragging about your computer skills.

CHIPS: The fattening non-nutritional food computer users eat to avoid having to leave their keyboards for meals.

CURSORS: What you turn into when you can't get your computer to perform as in "#$%&*(%$ computer!!!"

DISK: What goes out in your back after bending over a computer keyboard for seven hours at a clip.

ERROR: What you made the first time you walked into a computer showroom "just to look!"

EXPANSION UNIT: The new room you have to build onto your home to house your computer and all of its peripherals.

FILE: What your secretary can now do to her nails in six and a half hours a day, now that the computer does her work in 30 minutes.

FLOPPY: The condition of a constant computer user's stomach due to the lack of exercise and a steady diet of junk food. (See "CHIPS.")

HARDWARE: Tools such as lawnmowers, rakes and other heavy equipment you haven't laid a finger on since you got your computer.

IBM: The kind of missile your family members and friends would like to drop on your computer so you'll pay attention to them again.

MENU: What you'll never see again after buying a computer, because you'll be too poor to eat in a restaurant.

MONITOR: What the Banking Commission does to your phone data after your bank balance mysteriously INCREASES with every check you write.

PROGRAMS: Those things put on by mental health groups to try to bring you back to the real world from "computer addiction."

RAM: What you do to the side of your computer after only a week and a half.

TERMINAL: A place where you can find buses, trains, and really good deals on computers.

WINDOW: What you heave your computer out of after you accidently erase a program that took you three days to set up.

PC MAGAZINE REVIEWS
TANDY COMPUTERS

Earlier this week, several Tandy executives attended the "1987 PC Forum" in Scottsdale, Arizona. PC Magazine publisher William Lohse and Editor Bill Machrone made it a point to tell Graham Beachum and/or me, how well they think we're doing in the marketplace, and how highly they regard our MS-DOS product line. Too bad they don't write the reviews in their magazine!

When we returned to Fort Worth, we found the March 31 issue of PC, with reviews on the Tandy 1000 EX, 1000 SX, and 3000 HL computers. The reviewer obviously didn't share their enthusiasm. But... neither did he understand or have accurate facts about the machines he reviewed.

We won't argue with a reviewer who forms his negative opinions based on fact, but these reviews weren't in that category. I'll say that the reviewer obviously didn't understand the 1000 EX and its positioning as an entry-level home and school product. He tried to measure it by office standards... the need for IBM board compatibility, the lack of hard disk capability, etc. I would suggest that it actually is a computer capable of running IBM PC software, at a price most people would expect to pay for a computer principally intended for entertainment.

That said, I will try to overlook his opinion-based statements and address some of the half-truths and outright errors...

1) The EX was panned for lack of expandability, and it was said we offer *"640K RAM expansion and a 300/1200-baud modem."* The impression left was that only two boards are available. Fact – we offer seven... the RAM, a 300-baud modem, a 1200-baud modem, RS-232, mouse/clock board, Network 4 card, and STB's new EX Chauffeur display adapter. More are coming.

2) Of both the EX and SX, the reviewer said *our video signal timing is so far off the IBM standard that the 25th line of the display disappears behind the monitor bezel of non-Tandy monitors.* Fact – ours are 220-line monitors, while IBM's display 200 vertical lines. There is a MODE 200 command which

may be keyed in or put in an AUTOEXEC.BAT file to compensate if you're using a non-Tandy monitor.

3) The EX was described as "... *a moderate performer, yielding nowhere near the double speed its fast clock would imply.*" Fact – 7.16 Mhz is 50% faster than 4.77 Mhz, not double. We claim a 20% throughput gain, which is exactly what PC found.

4) *"The {EX's} 4.77 Mhz speed was even more disappointing, at best 10 percent slower than the standard IBM time."* Fact – With 256K RAM, the video refresh is interleaved. When you expand beyond 256K, video RAM is re-positioned, and refresh is no longer interleaved. Speed should at least equal the IBM.

5) *"For anyone accustomed to the IBM standard, the {EX} keyboard is a terror."* By the time he reached the SX, the same keyboard was "*both compelling and confounding. The touch is positive, with both audible and tactile feedback.*" Fact – it's the same keyboard that received raves on the Tandy 2000. Absolute keyboard cloning is hardly a major issue to a first time user. Our "enhanced keyboard", an exact duplicate of IBM's "enhanced keyboard" (except for indicator lights), can be adapted to the SX for those with a need for key placement compatibility.

6) Personal DeskMate was described as "... *all the software you'll need--until you discover how much better commercial programs can be.*" Fact – it's furnished free with the computer. It's an entry-level program designed to give the user immediate utility and the ease of use provided by Microsoft Windows conventions. There was no intention or claim that DeskMate replaces hi-level, full-featured applications packages. We hope introducing new users to the concepts involved, will allow them to make a more informed choice of full-featured, megabuck "commercial programs", when they're ready.

7) "... *the 1000 EX will not run PC-DOS 3.2.*" Fact – *the 1000 EX absolutely runs PC-DOS 3.2.*" (It obviously won't run IBM's BASIC, since part of IBM's BASIC

is and always has been in ROM. Could this be what confused the reviewer?)

8) "...*the 1000 EX has severe limitations. The worst of these are proprietary expansion, no provision for a hard disk, and its odd keyboard.*" Fact - most entry-level users or "homework" users, will need video, a printer, and the ability to expand to 640K. They'll transport their work on floppies, hardly on hard disks. And to my knowledge, all the popular software is still delivered on floppies... Lotus, Ashton-Tate, Microsoft, etc. If your needs are greater, you should be looking at a 1000 SX anyway.

9) "*You must buy a special Tandy adapter cable to tie in your parallel printer.*" Fact - We use an industry-standard parallel I/O... there's no adapter involved. Yes, you have to buy a printer cable -- regardless of the computer you choose.

10) The Tandy 1000 SX is described as a "*stripped down though not unlikable machine.*" Fact - The SX comes with 384K, two drives, faster clock, dual speed processor, printer interface, monochrome and color video interface, graphics capability, composite and RGBI outputs, sound, line-level audio output, light pen port, two joystick ports, an 8087 co-processor socket, and five open PC-compatible slots (even with 640K RAM on board.) And, it's supplied with DOS, BASIC, and DeskMate II. Maybe I'm getting subjective, but I'd sure like him to tell me when a computer ceases to be "stripped down."

11) "*The standard MS-DOS 2.11 operating system of the 1000 SX allows access to a huge library of PC-Compatible programs. Yet the machine does have its incompatibilities. Like many older compatibles, it will not run PC-DOS 3.2.*" Fact - not only does it run PC-DOS 3.2, but it is supplied standard with MS-DOS 3.2, not 2.11 as stated.

12) On both the EX and SX, memory benchmark tests were not run "because of insufficient memory." We'd have been most happy to send additional memory, had it been requested. We supply reviewers with any configuration they ask for. Had the mem-

ory been installed, the video memory change would probably have resulted in better numbers for all the tests.

13) In a chart on page 168, *parallel ports were listed as optional on both the 1000 EX and 1000 SX*. Fact - They're standard... built right onto the mother board.

14) Same chart shows *expansion slots for the EX as "none"*. Fact - The EX has one proprietary slot. Our memory expansion card, when plugged into that slot, provides two additional "plus slots" for two more option boards.

15) The review of the 3000 HL says it has *seven slots, three "XT-style 8-bit" and four "full AT-style 16-bit."* Fact - reverse the numbers and you have it... four XT and three AT slots.

Don't get me wrong... I know the senior executives at PC magazine, and have great respect for them and their publication. This is a commentary on three Tandy reviews, nothing more.

Less than two days after the review reached us, there was at least one message thread, about the inaccuracies, on CompuServe's Tandy forums. I believe it is appropriate that we should take this avenue -- about the most timely one open to us -- to set the record straight. I have asked PC Magazine's publisher what can be done to set the record straight with his readers.

OOPS !

Just to prove that when WE make a mistake, we set our records straight. Here are two examples...

Ed Hathaway of the Glenside CoCo Club of Illinois was kind enough to call a typo to my attention. In last month's newsletter, I quoted three CoCo "system prices". The first contained the error. Individual pricing should have been $399.90, and the system price 329.95. Sorry about that... I and all my proof-readers missed it.

Ed also questioned the fact that there have recently been some sales which resulted in an even lower price than the system prices listed. Gee, I hope so! The system prices are on-going "everyday" prices. A sale wouldn't be much of a "sale" if it didn't represent a better
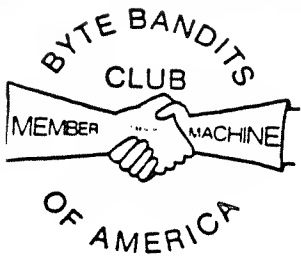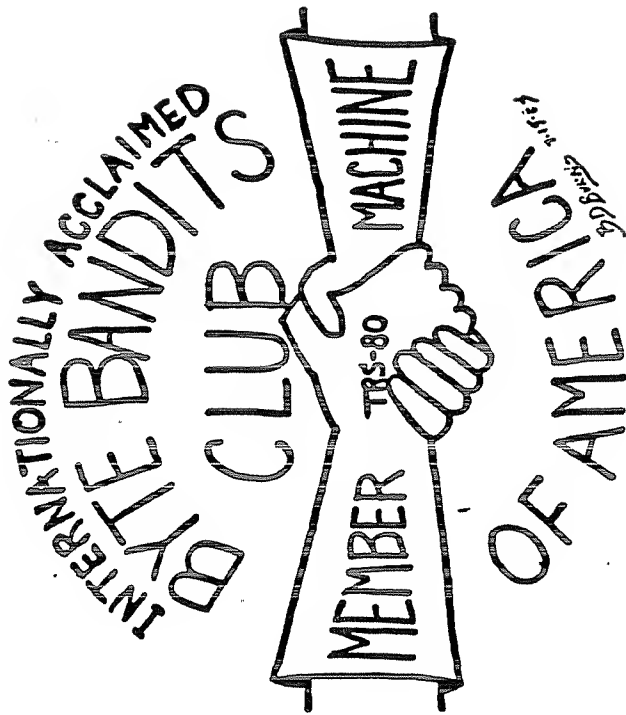
JAN. — PROGRAM "OPERATING SYSTEMS"

FEB. — FOR YOUR COMPUTERS BASIC PROGRAMMING

MARCH — PROGRAMS "INSTALLATION" IN YOUR COMPUTER

APRIL — CARE AND CLEANING OF COMPUTER ACCESSORIES

MAY — COMPUTER BOOKS AND MAGAZINES

JUNE — TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND YOU

JULY — COMPUTER SCHOOLS

AUG. — COMPUTER UTILITY PROGRAMS -COURSES-CLASSES

SEPT. — COPY PROTECTION-COPYING PROGRAMS

OCT. — PROGRAMMING ERRORS AND REPAIRS

NOV. — COMPUTER CLUB REVIEW

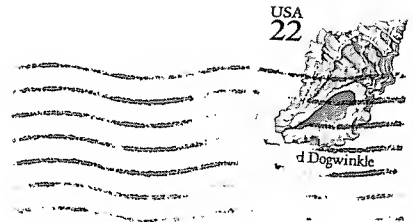DEC. — PRINTERS-PATCHES-PROTICOLS

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